



October 20, 2017

Re: Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking Comments on E-rate Category Two WC Docket No. 13-184

Our small rural library serves a population of 8,891 (the population of Cass City is 2,337 plus others in our surrounding area). We have relied on E-rate funds to help provide the best possible services to our community. When it became possible to receive funds for Wi-Fi and internal connections, we were able to provide better service than ever before. Prior to the E-rate Modernization in 2014, we had a router that provided spotty and limited Wi-Fi. In fact patrons frequently told us that their computers and phones weren't working, or that they were in the midst of doing something when they lost connection. The best we could do was have them work on one of the public access computers which meant that they had to stop working on their computer, save the information, and start the whole process again. Sometimes even that wasn't an option because there were no available public access computers.

Since we've been able to purchase the necessary equipment with funds we received through E-rate we have excellent, reliable Wi-Fi throughout our library. We haven't had anyone complain about having troubles with the system. What a relief to them, and to us! It is rewarding to see young adults sitting in the library using their phone and the Wi-Fi. We have a safe and comfortable place for them to be. Many adults come in and use their iPads or eReaders and we often assist them in how to use these devices. Also, we have several adults who are taking online classes that come to the library several days each week to study and attend class. One young man has often remarked that he couldn't have gotten his BA without us! And now he's here daily working on his Master's Degree.

Not everyone in our community can purchase a computer, iPhone, or pay for internet service. With E-rate funds we can provide it, making it possible for individuals and families to learn, grow, find new jobs, better themselves. The funds have meant a lot to our library employees because we are better able to help our patrons. But to our patrons, it has been in many cases, life-changing.

We are very thankful that the funds were there for us and we hope that you will secure these funds for the full five year budget period as outlined in the 2014 Modernization Order so that other libraries who are in the process of upgrading or connecting may have the chance to improve service and impact the lives of many patrons.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ruth Steele
Assistant Library Director
and E-rate Coordinator